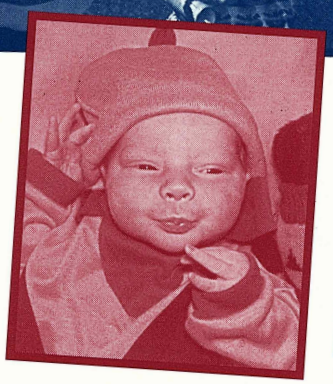
MO
GOV.EC
2:In 8

MISSOURI STATE LIBRARY
0 1907 0066976 4





MISSOURI STATE LIBRARY
APR 14 1998 593
DEPOSITORY DOCUMENT

In the Interest of Minds: The Power of Early Childhood Care and Education

To request a copy of the full report of the Governor's Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education, contact:

The Family Investment Trust
3915 West Pine Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63108; or
Telephone (314) 531-5505.

IN THE INTEREST OF MINDS

THE POWER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Report of the Governor's Commission
On
Early Childhood Care and Education

DECEMBER 1997

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commission Members i

Vision Statement, System Outcomes, Guiding Principles iii

Introduction 1

What is the Immediate Next Step? 5

Policy Recommendations:

Policy Recommendation 1:
Support Creation of a Cohesive Early Care and Education System 7

Policy Recommendation 2:
Support Expansion of Local Early Care and Education Initiatives 11

Policy Recommendation 3:
Set High Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education 13

Policy Recommendation 4:
Promote Training and Education of Early Care and Education Practitioners 17

Policy Recommendation 5:
Establish School-Linked Programs for 3 and 4 Year Olds 19

Policy Recommendation 6:
Assure Sufficient Funding and Create Incentives to Promote Quality
Early Childhood Care and Education 21

Appendix A: Executive Order 25

Appendix B: History of the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education 27

Commission Members

First Lady Jean Carnahan, Special Liaison to the Commission

Mr. Joe Moseley, Chairman, Vice President and General Counsel, Shelter Insurance, Columbia

Rev. Earl Able, Pastor, Palestine Missionary Baptist Church of Jesus Christ, Kansas City

Dr. Bruce Anderson, President, The Danforth Foundation, St. Louis

Dr. Bob Bartman, Commissioner of Education, Jefferson City

Ms. Karen Berding, Parents as Teachers Coordinator, Moberly

The Honorable Roseann Bentley, State Senator, Springfield

Dr. James Caccamo, Executive Director, Partnership for Children, Kansas City

Ms. Marcia Cline, United Way of St. Louis, St. Louis

The Honorable Rita Days, State Representative, St. Louis

Dr. Maureen Dempsey, Director, Department of Health, Jefferson City

Mr. Reginald Dickson, Chairman, Buford, Dickson, Harper and Sparrow, Inc., St. Louis

Mr. Fred Epstein, Owner, Indeeco, St. Louis

Mr. J. Scott Francis, Director, Francis Family Foundation, Kansas City

Ms. Linda Hyde, First Vice-President, Missouri PTA, Springfield

Ms. Karla McLucas, Director, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Jefferson City

The Honorable Joe Maxwell, State Senator, Mexico

Ms. Tonya Merritt, Owner, Step at a Time Preschool, Cape Girardeau

The Honorable Cindy Ostmann, State Representative, St. Peters

Ms. Corinne Patton, Child Care Policy Consultant, St. Louis

Ms. Christine Reams, Central Outreach Coordinator, Lutheran Children and Family Services, St. Louis

Ms. Janet K. Root, Director, Child Care Resource and Referral Program, YWCA, St. Joseph

Dr. L. Carol Scott, Manager, Metropolitan Council on Child Care, Kansas City

Mr. Gary Stangler, Director, Department of Social Services

Dr. Kathy R. Thornburg, Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, Columbia

Ms. Linda Doolin Ward, Director of Corporate Planning, Payless Cashways, Kansas City

Dr. Robert W. Watkins, Superintendent, Independence Public Schools, Independence

Mr. Eugene Wilson, President, Youth Development, Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City

Mr. Roger Wilson, Lieutenant Governor, Jefferson City

Dr. Roy Wilson, Director, Department of Mental Health, Jefferson City

Commission Staff

Dr. Stephen Barr, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jefferson City

Mr. R. Scott Buchanan, Executive Director

Ms. Paula Peters Chambers, Editor

Ms. Marah Dorris, Deputy Director

Ms. Melinda Elmore, Department of Mental Health, Jefferson City

Ms. Margaret Franklin, Bureau Chief, Child Care, Safety and Licensure, Jefferson City

Ms. Ruth Flynn, Director, Early Childhood Education, Jefferson City

Ms. Deborah Howland, Program Development Specialist, Jefferson City

Ms. Christine Huck

Sr. Ann Clarice Jaeger, Coordinator, Early Childhood Catholic Education Office, St. Louis

Dr. Javad Kashani, Senior Psychiatrist, Mid-Missouri Mental Health Center, Columbia

Mr. Brian Long, Assistant Director of Policy Development, Office of the Governor, Jefferson City

Ms. Patricia Ashbaugh Martin, Director, Missouri Head Start, State Collaboration, Columbia

Ms. Nancee Dahms-Stimson, Youth and Senior Service Consultant, Missouri State Library, Jefferson City

Special Consultants

Cheri Hayes, Executive Director, The Finance Project, Washington, DC

Sharon Lynn Kagan, Senior Research Associate, Yale Bush Center on Child Development and Social Policy, New Haven, CT

Anne Mitchell, Consultant, Early Childhood Policy Research, Climax, NY

Louise Stoney, Consultant, Stoney Associates, Averill Park, NY

Governor's Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education

VISION STATEMENT

Early childhood care and education begins at birth. It can have either a positive or negative effect on children and their long-term development. The state of Missouri will ensure the provision of quality early childhood care and education that promotes positive results for *all* its residents.

SYSTEM OUTCOMES

All early care and education programs and funds will be administered within a single, coordinated system. The system should promote collaboration, reduce fragmentation, increase cost efficiencies and support quality.

All children will have opportunities for early learning. Affordable early care and education programs will be available to all families who choose to enroll their child(ren); home-based supports will be available to families who remain at home with their child(ren).

All available early care and education resources will be used to expand and support quality early childhood care and education for Missouri's children.

Missouri's system of financing early childhood care and education will encourage all programs to provide high-quality services.

Missouri's system of financing early childhood care and education will include incentives for programs and providers that are accredited by a professionally recognized organization, serve children with disabilities, serve infants and toddlers, provide evening/weekend/odd-hour care, and/or target geographic areas of high need.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Public support for early childhood care and education should be available to all families and should focus on promoting and supporting high-quality early learning opportunities.

2. The needs of children of all ages should be considered, with special emphasis on very young children, birth through kindergarten entry.

3. Parents have the right to select the type of early childhood care and education that is most appropriate for their family and child(ren). The early care and education system should support parents who remain at home with their child(ren) and those who work outside the home.

4. The early care and education system should eliminate existing inconsistencies between "child care" and "early education" policies and practices.

5. The early care and education system should ensure accountability for quality teacher training, facilities licensing and program accreditation through appropriate regulatory requirements and financial incentives.

6. Economically disadvantaged families should be given more assistance in paying for early childhood care and education than upper-income families.

7. Financing mechanisms for early childhood care and education should draw on public and private sector resources.

IN THE INTEREST OF MINDS

THE POWER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Report of the Governor's Commission
On
Early Childhood Care and Education

INTRODUCTION

Missouri citizens believe that every child is entitled to a fair chance at the onset of life and that every child should be ready for the rigors of learning when he or she begins school. The underlying principle is a sound one: Earlier is better. Earlier attention to children's needs and possibilities is better than later attempts to "fix" preventable problems and recapture lost opportunities.

Surprisingly, early childhood care and education is rarely a central concern of schools, social service agencies and economic development agencies. Although Missouri has been a forerunner in early childhood care and education, as evidenced by the success of the Parents As Teachers program, further action is needed.

Missouri's demographics underscore the need. Changes in the way Missourians live and work mean more young children, birth through age five, are receiving care and education in out-of-home settings. For significant portions of each day, many of Missouri's children under the age of six are being educated and cared for by individuals other than their parents.

What's At Stake? For too many families, the birth of a child leads to a nightmare of frustration when it is time for the mother to return to work. The household budget cannot be managed without her income. There is no safe and nurturing infant care close to home or work, and the programs recommended by friends and family have extensive waiting lists. Often matters do not improve as the child grows older.

Situations like this are common for working families and those eager to become economically independent. More than half of young mothers return to work within a year of their babies' births. The numbers of mothers of young children in the workforce has increased as more women choose professional careers, as welfare reform requires recipients to work, and as economic demands pressure families to have two wage earners. Finally, some parents remain at home and look to their community for support during the important first five years of their child's life.

Because children begin learning at birth, not at age five or six when they begin school, this reality has significance for children as well as their communities. Children's early experiences can have a decisive influence on how the brain develops. Neuroscientists have established that the way the brain develops during the first years of life has significant impact on later learning and intellectual growth. Without appropriate nurturance and stimulation, critical neuronal connections can be forever lost.

Yet research confirms that nationally only 15 percent of early care and education programs are of high quality. The majority are mediocre; a significant portion are detrimental to children's well-being. A major contributor to this state of affairs is the low compensation paid to early care and education providers and nonexistent benefits (such as health care coverage). The prevalence of low wages leads to high staff turnover, erratic caregiving practices, and suppression of program quality.

Healthy child development and learning depend upon nurturing and stimulating environments. Low-quality early childhood care and education can have harmful, long-term developmental consequences. High-quality early childhood care and education can help assure young children's healthy development and readiness for school learning.

What Is In Place? Missouri is a leader among states with its many innovative statewide programs directed to parent education and family support, and its vision of caring communities. In addition, Kansas City, St. Louis, and several smaller communities have launched exciting programs and initiatives to improve the quality of early care and education programs. These efforts, however, are stymied by gaps in the state's policy structure.

Early childhood care and education in Missouri operates in the absence of a coordinated and comprehensive policy framework. The absence of clear state policy to inform decision making is perhaps best represented by the fact that Missouri has no entity charged with overall responsibility for children's early care and education and its linkages to family support and preventive health care. Incomplete and unconnected components of the service delivery system reside in the Departments of Health, Social Services, Mental Health, and Elementary and Secondary Education.

Even if existing efforts were coordinated, significant gaps still would remain in the state's response to the development needs of young children, birth through five years of age. As a result, too many of Missouri's youngest citizens do not have access to the educational supports they need to enter school ready to succeed.

What is Quality Early Childhood Care and Education? Early childhood care and education serves children with and without special needs; children from families that are economically advantaged, middle-income, working poor and dependent on public assistance; and children from single-parent, two-parent and non-traditional families. Those who have responsibility for young children provide both care and education. The two cannot be made separate. The issue is whether the care and education provided promotes children's learning and development.

Early care and education programs encompass center-based and home-based services that provide non-parental care and education for young children. Center-based programs include nonprofit and for-profit child care, Head Start and other comprehensive development programs, school-based pre-kindergarten programs and part-day nursery schools. Home-based programs include family child care and home-based Head Start.

High quality early care and education programs are safe and nurturing and provide meaningful learning experiences for young children. They are staffed by personnel who are knowledgeable in child development and early childhood education. Quality programs view children's parents as critical partners in their work, and support mothers and fathers in their roles as parents and workers. The outcomes of quality early care and education programs include enhanced child development and school achievement.

For programs to be able to achieve these outcomes, there must be an effective system of early childhood care and education. Early care and education programs are important but insufficient to assure the quality of early childhood care and education. Quality programming depends upon an array of services that support and sustain them. These supportive services often are called the *infrastructure of early childhood care and education* and are essential to the provision of quality early care and education programs.

It takes quality programs and a substantial infrastructure to have a quality early care and education system. An effective and efficient early care and education system is easy for families to access, promotes good child outcomes, supports families as parents and workers, and is accountable for, and adequately funded, to ensure results.

How Will Results Be Ensured? Missouri currently tracks and reports on many indicators related to improved outcomes for children and their families. In addition, each state department reports on its annual operations and activities. Development and implementation of an evaluation plan that documents how the Commission's recommendations improve outcomes for children is a critical component of the work ahead. New strategies and programs for early childhood care and education generated as a result of this Commission should be assessed over time to ensure that they promote quality early childhood care and education and positive outcomes, including school success, for young children and their families.

How Is This Report Organized? The Commission made six broad policy recommendations. These recommendations directly address the policy issues outlined in Governor Mel Carnahan's charge to the Commission (see Appendix A). We believe these policy recommendations, which are listed below, can move Missouri to a new level of performance and accountability on behalf of its youngest citizens.

Recommendation 1:	Support creation of a cohesive early care and education system
Recommendation 2:	Support expansion of local early care and education initiatives
Recommendation 3:	Set high standards for early childhood care and education
Recommendation 4:	Promote training and education of early care and education practitioners
Recommendation 5:	Establish school-linked programs for 3 and 4 year olds
Recommendation 6:	Assure sufficient funding and create incentives to promote high quality early childhood care and education

These six policy recommendations structure the Commission's report. Each policy recommendation is followed by a rationale statement and a set of action recommendations that Missouri must undertake if all its young children are to enter school prepared to succeed.

In addition, the Commission identified a broad set of system outcomes for its work and an accountability timeline to accompany its recommendations. We believe that Missourians can demonstrate immediately their commitment to quality early childhood care and education by implementing a series of primary action recommendations by the year 2000. The notation <2000> follows those action recommendations that can be completed in the short-term. Action recommendations requiring longer-term commitments are followed by the notation <2010>, denoting the year 2010 as a completion date.

WHAT IS THE IMMEDIATE NEXT STEP?

Accurately projecting needs and costs, and developing concrete recommendations for revenue generation, proved to be a challenging task. This level of analysis requires detailed information and specialized knowledge about Missouri's systems of tax and finance, social service delivery and education.

There are two immediate next steps. First, the Commission recommends that the Governor charge an appropriate, statewide agency with responsibility for coordinating and restructuring the funding streams, administrative rules, regulations, policies and procedures that support early care and education programs and services.

Second, the Family Investment Trust (FIT) includes individuals who have the expertise and access to the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain the work of the Commission until the appropriate agency is designated. During this interim, FIT should be directed to continue the work begun by the Commission, including, but not limited to, projecting and measuring the need for, and cost of, early care and education services, and exploring the feasibility of implementing the revenue generation strategies listed below that, in addition to those identified in the action recommendations, can be used to finance early childhood care and education.

Finance Strategies for Further Investigation

1. Explore the implications and consequences of the state of Missouri paying equal rates of subsidy for child care across the state, that is, not varying subsidy rates across markets or localities.

2. Explore the feasibility of tax credits, including expansion of the Neighborhood Assistance Plan, for businesses that invest in early care and education facilities, and subsidize ongoing program costs associated with the provision of child care.

3. Explore the feasibility of establishing a low-interest loan program for early childhood care and education facilities using a public authority such as Missouri Health and Education Facilities Authority.

4. Develop financial models that help schools understand how to effectively use a variety of local, state and federal resources to develop and maintain quality early childhood care and education. The following funding sources should be included: Titles I, II, and VI; special education; line 14 of the Foundation Formula (163.031, RSMo); Professional Development; School Food Services; the Child and Adult Care Food Program; child care funds; state funds targeted to early care and education; donations or fees paid by businesses and industry; parent fees; foundation support; federal Child Care and Development Fund; and others.

5. Explore the feasibility of establishing a licensing fee to help support an early childhood professional development fund.

6. Explore the feasibility of expanding access to existing public revenue by designating a percentage of the school budget for school-based early learning.

7. Explore the feasibility of designating a portion of state lottery funds for early childhood care and education.

8. Examine a range of ideas for financing early childhood care and education in the private sector, such as:

   - a state loan guarantee program to assist providers in securing loans from commercial lenders,
   - a state direct loan program (or state/private revolving loan program) for early childhood facilities, and/or
   - a private bank consortia to create "community lending banks" and micro-loan programs for early childhood care and education facilities in low-income areas.

9. Explore the feasibility of encouraging employers, through a tax credit, to provide disability insurance that covers pregnancy leave for the purpose of helping employed mothers stay at home with their children beyond the traditional six-week leave following birth.

Closing Comments. Quality early childhood care and education is an educational opportunity for children, a critical support for parents, and a labor and economic development issue for Missouri. Commission members are most appreciative of Governor Mel Carnahan for his guidance in this important area, his decision to create the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education, and the leadership that we know will be forthcoming to advance these recommendations — so all Missouri's residents reap the positive effects of high-quality early childhood care and education.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1

Support Creation of a Cohesive Early Care and Education System

BASIS FOR ACTION

Without a well-planned system of sturdy roads and bridges, Missouri residents would be hampered in their efforts to work and carry out functions that require mobility. In the absence of a similarly well-planned, comprehensive system to make quality early care and education programs available, the healthy development of children, families and communities is compromised. Without this system, children are less prepared to succeed at school; parents are less attentive to their work; and Missouri is less able to attract and retain the skilled workers needed to compete successfully in an increasingly technological economy.

Direct early care and education services are important but insufficient to assure the quality of early care and education programs. Quality early childhood care and education is built on an array of services that support and sustain them. Often called the "infrastructure," these services usually are not apparent to the general public, yet they are indispensable. They are essential to the provision of quality early care and education programs.

We no longer can delay building an early care and education infrastructure. Today, more than 65 percent of parents with children under the age of six are in the paid labor force, many due to economic pressures and changes in family structure. This means that a significant number of Missouri's children require care and education from someone other than their parents for significant portions of their day.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor charge an appropriate, statewide agency such as the Family Investment Trust (FIT) or other appropriate entity, with responsibility for coordinating and/or restructuring the funding streams, administrative rules, regulations, policies and procedures that support early care and education programs and services.

Establishing a cohesive system of early childhood care and education will require bringing together representatives and resources from relevant state agencies and the federal Head Start program. A staff person with a background in early childhood care and education and knowledge of Missouri's delivery system should be designated to oversee the work. <2000>

The designation of FIT or other entity should be codified in statute by the General Assembly and directed to:

- Work with the Early Childhood Interagency Team (ECIT) to implement a coordinated early care and education system. The ECIT is comprised of representatives from four state agencies: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Services (DSS) and Department of Mental Health (DMH), plus Head Start.
- Identify appropriate statewide results, develop data collection strategies and evaluation tools, and share results effectively to ensure the well-being of Missouri's children. Assess current statewide indicators of child knowledge and performance, child and family conditions, and access to services and systems capacity.
- Build capacity at the community level by supporting local early care and education community partnerships.
- Work with state departments to revise and coordinate policies and procedures so they can support local early care and education community partnerships. For example, community-based work will be facilitated by creating coordinated early care and education delivery areas that are used by all state departments.
- Identify funding that can be reallocated or reconfigured to support early childhood care and education; seek new revenue sources; and project and measure the need for and cost of early care and education services.
- Monitor progress in achieving identified statewide results and the Commission's recommendations; submit periodic reports to the Governor and Legislature regarding progress toward achieving recommendations.

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Department of Health to institutionalize and provide sustained support to the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Network. <2000>

- The CCR&R Network should provide consultation and technical assistance to local resource and referral agencies, establish standards for resource and referral services, and administer, as appropriate, state and federal funds.
- The CCR&R Network should be directed to expand resource and referral services to the entire state to strengthen services in all communities, including quality improvement efforts, consumer education and community planning, and supply-building efforts.

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Department of Health to establish a statewide electronic data base that includes information related to violations of law and regulation and is accessible to early care and education consumers. This data base should be made available through CCR&R agencies, and link with data bases on the local supply of early childhood care and education and with available information on child development and parent education opportunities. <2010>

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2

Support Expansion of Local Early Care and Education Initiatives

BASIS FOR ACTION

Communities are effective places to develop a common vision and shared financing for early childhood care and education. Performing this role, however, requires strong state support and leadership. Responsibility for oversight and administration of early childhood care and education is presently shared among multiple state departments. Ensuring the efficient delivery of effective early care and education services across the state requires state departments to coordinate policies and funding in ways that are closely aligned with local programs and services. Services and supports should maximize the use of existing community resources and promote the thoughtful use of best practices. Funding must be sufficient to support both direct services and the infrastructure needed to deliver those services. Benchmarks of progress toward expected results should be stated clearly, measured regularly, and used continuously to improve the quality of early childhood care and education.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct state agencies to involve communities as partners in identifying and addressing local early childhood care and education needs and resources. New and existing state expenditures should expand and promote quality early care and education experiences for young children and should be informed by input from appropriate community partnerships. Valuable community partners in this process include local schools, community Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs), Caring Community Partnerships, Parents as Teachers, the University of Missouri Extension service, libraries, child care programs, Head Start programs, local chambers of commerce, Educare, Community Health Assessment Resource Teams (CHART), local

health agencies and the United Way. Caring Communities is one proven model for community-state collaboration. The Commission recommends that the Governor expand this and similar approaches with a renewed emphasis on explicit opportunities for community partnerships that can address local early childhood care and education needs. <2010>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor ensure that parents who remain at home with their children are aware of and able to access home-based early learning initiatives, such as Parents As Teachers, home-based Head Start, and other parent education and family support initiatives. <2010>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct Parents As Teachers and appropriate state agencies (i.e., DESE, DOH, DMH) to create procedures to conduct developmental screenings of Missouri children who, by age 2, have yet to be screened by other approved agencies (e.g., First Steps or Head Start). Procedures should be developed in conjunction with, or with the approval of, local health boards and the Healthy Start program. Procedures should include development of appropriate training, approved screening devices, an appropriate referral protocol and provisions for obtaining informed parental or guardian permission. <2010>

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3

Set High Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education

BASIS FOR ACTION

Research documents that healthy child development and learning depend upon nurturing and stimulating environments. Children's early experiences can have a decisive influence on how the brain develops. Neuroscientists have established that the way the brain develops during the first years of life has a significant impact on later learning and intellectual growth.

Researchers have documented that high-quality early care and education programs have a better chance of promoting young children's healthy development. Similarly, researchers have acknowledged the harmful long-term developmental consequences of low-quality early care and education programs.

Research has confirmed that only 15 percent of early care and education programs are of high quality. The majority are mediocre; a significant portion are detrimental to children's well-being. Public policy can use the tools of licensure, accreditation, incentives and consumer and public education to produce excellent early care and education programs.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor, in conjunction with national efforts, lead and support an ongoing public awareness campaign. The campaign should be coordinated with the CCR&R Network, the Missouri Parent-Teacher Association (Missouri PTA), ParentLink and community-based organizations, such as local CCR&R agencies, early care and education community partnerships, the United Way, professional organizations and government leaders. The campaign should expand public understanding of the importance of parent education and high-quality early care and education programs to healthy brain development and school success; and the positive impact of family-friendly employer policies on healthy child development and economic productivity. <2000>

The campaign might:

- Make awards for excellence to public and private employers and communities that support families with young children and to early care and education programs that exemplify essential elements of quality.
- Work with public and private employers to convey the economic impact of quality early childhood care and education, including worker recruitment, retention and productivity, and the positive impact on the supply of infant-toddler programs when employers provide staggered work shifts for parents of very young children.
- Assure the provision of parent education materials from government agencies, using existing programs and avenues of education, regarding the importance of nuturance, stimulation, and early childhood care and education to optimal brain development and enhanced childhood potential.

■ The Commission recommends that accreditation by a professionally recognized organization become the standard by which quality is measured for early care and education programs. Funds should be allocated to increase the number of accredited early care and education programs, including the provision of technical assistance to individual programs. Special attention should be directed to programs serving infants regarding the implications of recent brain research to early learning and development. <2000>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor ensure that all early care and education programs receiving public funds, either directly or indirectly, document their program objectives and regularly assess their attainment. <2000>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor propose to the General Assembly that it amend statutory requirements and direct state agencies to amend regulatory requirements for early care and education programs in order to guarantee children's health and safety. <2000>

Needed amendments include:

Regulatory

- All providers of regulated early care and education programs and of subsidized, non-regulated programs should submit to a Child Abuse/Neglect (CAN) screening and a criminal history background check through the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES). The CAN screening should include household members over the age of 12 in family child-care settings. Persons with substantiated CAN histories and/or criminal records which indicate behaviors that endanger children should be excluded from work in early childhood care and education.

- All providers of regulated early care and education programs and of subsidized, non-regulated programs who have supervisory responsibility over children should be 18 years or older.
- All providers of regulated early care and education programs and of subsidized, non-regulated programs should have a working telephone in order to contact assistance in an emergency and ease access for parents.
- All children under the age of 12, including ones related to the provider, should be included when calculating group size and ratios, to ensure reasonable group sizes and ratios in child care settings.
- Group size for preschoolers in center-based early care and education programs should be set at no more than 20.
- All non-regulated providers of subsidized early childhood care and education should submit to tuberculosis testing as currently provided in statute for regulated child care providers, and be free of tuberculosis.
- All providers of regulated early childhood care and education and of subsidized, nonregulated programs should undergo pre-licensing training.

Administrative

- Subsidized, nonregulated early care and education facilities should receive orientation briefings and material about the regulatory process and appropriate practices in early care and education programs. These materials, developed under the leadership of the Missouri Early Childhood Interagency Team (ECIT), should include targeted information regarding the appropriate care of infants and toddlers.

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct state departments to automate the licensing process and cross-train regulatory staff so they can conduct multiple types of inspections. This action will improve monitoring, ease access to needed data, streamline accessibility for providers and promote timely licensure. <2010>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Department of Health to assess critically its child-care regulatory, licensing and monitoring processes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the licensing system. The review should include, but not be limited to, consideration of instituting differential monitoring processes that monitor facilities based upon past regulatory performance. Facilities with no substantiated complaint and a history of good performance should undergo an expedited renewal process. <2010>

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 4

Promote Training and Education of Early Care and Education Practitioners

BASIS FOR ACTION

The most important determinate of high quality in early care and education programs is the qualifications of the staff and higher levels of post-secondary education that are specifically focused on the teaching and learning of young children. Training in child development and early education crosses many disciplines. Parents and other relative caregivers benefit from increased skills in guiding children's behavior and promoting early learning. Staff in parent-education and family-support programs gain from child development knowledge. Staff in pre-kindergarten, child-care and Head Start programs should be able to work effectively with children, families and community resources. Early care and education administrators need expertise as leaders and managers of increasingly complex programs. Regardless of program setting, compensation for program staff must be commensurate with their training and skills. The Carnegie Corporation's recent report on comprehensive learning strategies for America's children concludes that helping early care and education practitioners master effective practice is one of the best investments taxpayers can make in children's learning.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor endorse and fund the Opportunities in a Professional Education Network (OPEN) to provide leadership for the development of a statewide, multi-level system of professional preparation and continuing development for early care and education practitioners. OPEN is a statewide, public-private planning process to develop a statewide professional development system for early care and education practitioners. <2000>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct appropriate state agencies, working in coordination with OPEN, to establish through administrative rule and policy a system of multi-level credentialing that includes pre-service requirements and procedures for verifying completion of training. Training and education to support the use of good early care and education practices should be available through a coordinated delivery system to all parts of the state. <2000>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct appropriate state agencies, working in coordination with OPEN, to develop strategies that encourage early care and education practitioners to participate in training and education. Strategies should include consideration of financial incentives for providers who meet requirements associated with higher levels of the multi-level credentialing system; rewards for programs that hire better qualified staff; and scholarships such as T.E.A.C.H. (Training, Education, and Compensation Help) that connect providers' qualifications with increased compensation. <2000>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct appropriate state agencies to expand and modify parent education and family support initiatives, such as Parents As Teachers and Educare, to support relatives, friends and neighbors who provide care and education for children while parents work or attend training. <2010>

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 5

Establish School-Linked Programs for 3 and 4 Year Olds

BASIS FOR ACTION

Parents agree that early learning is important. Increasing numbers of parents—those who work outside the home and those who remain at home—enroll their children in preschool programs. Access to early care and education services also is key to helping families move from welfare dependency to self-sufficiency. Public schools are central to communities and can play a vital role in expanding and improving early care and education opportunities for children birth through age five that are responsive to community needs. Schools receive resources from multiple funding sources; by coordinating these funds, schools can maximize program quality and its availability to families, as well as the supply of quality early care and education programs for children birth to kindergarten.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor request that the General Assembly establish in statute and support an optional, full-day, year-round preschool (Pre-K) program for 3- through 5-year-old children whose parents choose to enroll them. Consideration should be given to a sliding-fee scale for families who have difficulty meeting the program's financial requirements. Appropriate state agencies should jointly create and develop the Pre-K program; local early care and education community partnerships should be involved in the planning. The Pre-K program should coordinate with existing public school, Head Start and child care programs.

Funds should be made available to school districts to help cover costs associated with this program. School districts should be encouraged to contract with existing community programs. Regardless of auspice, Pre-K programs should be licensed, meet established quality standards, and be responsive to families' needs, those with working parents and those with a parent at home. Pre-K programs should employ well-qualified early care and education providers and work toward program accreditation by a professionally recognized organization. <2000>

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 6

Assure Sufficient Funding and Create Incentives to Promote Quality Early Childhood Care and Education

BASIS FOR ACTION

Achieving the outcomes of good, accessible early childhood care and education for all of Missouri's children and families will require existing resources to be used more effectively. Government and business funding will need to increase, and adequate funding be devoted to improving the early care and education infrastructure. However generated, funds should be administered via a coordinated early care and education system that supports a diverse range of community-based services and family needs. Communities should be able to flexibly and easily access available funds. When funds are administered by different state departments, common rules, regulations and reporting requirements should be established. These elements are essential to the delivery of high-quality early care and education programs and services.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct state agencies to restructure publicly funded early care and education subsidies to encourage and reward programs that provide high-quality early learning. This should include establishing higher child-care reimbursement rates for programs and providers that meet specific quality standards, e.g. are regulated, accredited, and have staff with professional credentials. Subsidy payments should be increased by 20 percent for licensed programs and 30 percent for licensed early care and education programs accredited by a professionally recognized organization. <2010>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor propose to the General Assembly that all families needing child care in order to work or attend training and whose incomes are at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line receive a child-care subsidy. The subsidy should be partially funded by parent fees. However, no co-payment should be required for families with incomes at or below 100 percent of the poverty line. A sliding fee scale should be established for families with incomes between 100 and 185 percent of the poverty line. <2010>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor establish that families spend no more than 20 percent of their net income on early childhood care and education. Subsidies for families could be provided in tax policy, such as through establishment of a state Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit. <2010>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor propose to the General Assembly that it generate revenue for early care and education programs, services, and the early care and education infrastructure. <2000>

The General Assembly should be requested to:

- Transfer 30 percent of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] funds to the Child Care and Development Fund.
- Reinvest TANF savings into child care and related family support services.
- Earmark funds from gaming admission fees for the early care and education system, with an initial focus on school-linked Pre-K programs serving children 3 through 5 years of age.
- Authorize school districts to use funds from "line 14" of the school foundation formula, currently defined in statute as for "at-risk" children, for school-linked early care and education programs.
- Expand allowable uses of the mandated set-aside (1 percent) for professional development in local and state education budgets to include early care and education programs.
- Allow license-exempt (DOH regulated) early care and education programs to participate in the federal Child and Adult Care Food program.

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Department of Social Services to explore the possibility of using Medicaid funding to help low-income providers acquire group health insurance. <2010>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Family Investment Trust, in coordination with the Department of Revenue, to explore the feasibility of establishing a refundable state child and dependent care tax credit. <2000>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Department of Social Services to structure financial incentives using a "disproportionate share" reimbursement methodology to recognize child care programs and family child care providers with high concentrations of low-income families. The Commission recognizes that welfare-to-work increases the number of publicly subsidized families needing child care which, in turn, aggravates the financial strain of child care programs and family child care providers serving significant numbers of low-income families. This recommendation includes establishing higher reimbursement rates for programs and providers that are accredited and staffed with individuals with professional credentials. <2000>

■ To address the unique needs of children and families that traditionally have been underserved, the Commission recommends that the Governor direct state agencies to structure financial incentives to increase services to targeted populations. This includes increasing public subsidy to early care and education programs that care for infants and toddlers and children with Individual Family Service Plans or Individual Education Plans that require additional child supervision, and to those programs that offer services during nontraditional hours, evenings and weekends. <2000>

■ The Commission recommends that the Governor work toward increasing the percentage of funds allocated in the state budget to support a system of early childhood care and education. The percentage of funds allocated to support the system's infrastructure should be increased by a minimum of one percent every two years until it reaches 10 percent of total costs for direct services. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, professional development, CCR&R services and program monitoring. <2010>

APPENDIX A

Executive Order 97-07

WHEREAS, the Outstanding Schools Act and related initiatives have ensured that schools are better prepared to serve children who enter the public school system; and

WHEREAS, recent neurological research demonstrates that children begin learning at birth and confirms that infants realize significant emotional and educational benefits from positive and stimulating experiences; and

WHEREAS, the role of parents as caregivers and teachers is critical to the development of infants; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to the health of families and the future of the state that children start school ready to learn; and

WHEREAS, previous and ongoing endeavors, including the work of The Family Investment Trust and the Children's Services Commission, have demonstrated the benefits of collaborative and coordinated service delivery that involves families and communities; and

WHEREAS, despite state, local, and private efforts, there is still an unmet need for early childhood services.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mel Carnahan, Governor of the State of Missouri, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Missouri, do hereby establish the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education.

The Commission shall review early childhood services currently available to Missouri families and recommend any measures needed to ensure that services are delivered through a comprehensive, coordinated, locally focused, and cost-effective system that advances the goal of preparing all Missouri children to enter school ready to learn. The recommendations of the Commission shall include methods of:

a) coordinated budgeting of current funding streams that support children's services;

b) identifying and encouraging best practices and standards of quality child care;

c) raising public awareness about the importance of early childhood care and education and the relationship between early positive experiences and neurological development;

d) connecting families with young children with needed information and services;

e) promoting citizen and community involvement in early childhood care and education;

f) connecting local schools and child care providers;

g) encouraging local schools to consider either providing or supporting quality child care;

h) encouraging public/private partnerships as a way to increase access to affordable, quality child care; and

i) innovative and practical ways to finance needed improvements in early childhood care and education.

The Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education shall consist of representatives from state government, the business community, parent organizations, philanthropic organizations, leaders from the fields of education and child care, and other members as appointed by the Governor. The Governor shall designate one of the members to serve as chairperson. The chairperson may designate advisory committees composed of both commission members and nonmembers to develop information and ideas for consideration. The Commission shall deliver its recommendations to the Governor no later than December 31, 1997, and shall thereafter disband.

APPENDIX B

History of the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education

The Governor's Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education was created by Executive Order 97-07 and signed by Governor Mel Carnahan on May 28, 1997. [See Appendix A.] The order emerged from the work of the Governor's Policy Academy on Managing Systemic Change in Education and its 1996 report *Children Ready for School, Schools Ready for Children, Families Ready for the Future*. The report called for the Governor to develop a strategy for integrating early childhood care and education with school reform and Caring Communities, and recommended impaneling a broad-based group to study the issue.

Executive Order 97-07 instructed the Commission to review early childhood services in the state and provide recommendations of measures needed to ensure that services are delivered through a comprehensive, coordinated, locally focused and cost-effective system that advances the preparation of all Missouri children to enter school ready to achieve. The Executive Order provided that the Commission would disband on December 31, 1997.

In his selection of personnel to serve on the Commission, the Governor chose representatives from numerous fields of interest in the area of early childhood care and education. Governor Carnahan designated Joe Moseley of Columbia as chairman of the Commission. Because of her involvement with promoting greater awareness of early childhood care and education and early brain development research, the chairman of the Commission named Missouri's First Lady, Jean Carnahan, as Special Liaison to the Commission. The Commission extends special recognition and thanks to Mrs. Carnahan for valuable input and support.

The full Commission met seven times at various locations around the state, including Jefferson City, Columbia, St. Louis and Kansas City. The Commission toured high-quality early care and education programs in Kansas City and received public comment in both Kansas City and St. Louis.

Much of the work of the Commission was carried out by Commission subcommittees. The Chairman of the Commission, upon review of the Executive Order, organized the membership and expertise of the Commission into three groups: Best Practices, Community Capacity and Resources and Investment. The Best Practices subcommittee was charged with the subject area of standards of quality early childhood care and education; the Community Capacity subcommittee dealt largely with the areas of supply and community information; and the Resources and Investment subcommittee worked with the area of funding and finance. Dr. Kathy Thornburg, University of Missouri Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, was designated to chair the subcommittee on Best Practices.
Dr. L. Carol Scott, Manager of the Metropolitan Council on Child Care, was designated to chair the subcommittee on Community Capacity. Mr. Eugene Wilson, president of Youth Development for the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, was designated to chair the Resources and Investment subcommittee.

The members of each of the subcommittees expended a great deal of time and effort to locate information relevant to their areas and make appropriate recommendations. While some of the full Commission meetings were dedicated to subcommittee work, the three groups met separately to explore in detail their respective areas of focus. Each subcommittee produced a report that was presented to the full Commission at its October meeting in St. Louis. The Commission then distilled the subcommittee results into the final set of recommendations submitted to Governor Carnahan.

Special Thanks

The work of the Commission was aided by affiliated staff from various state departments and professions. Although the staff who contributed to this report and the Commission's work are too lengthy to enumerate, the Commission would like to extend particular thanks to Stephen Barr, Sister Ann Clarice Jaeger, Melinda Elmore, Margee Franklin, Ruth Flynn, Debby Howland, Javad Kashani, Brian Long and Patti Martin. The Commission also wishes to extend thanks to Billie Collier of United Services in St. Peters and to Harris-Stowe College for the provision of space to conduct public hearings.

Acknowledgment

The Commission extends a very special thanks to the Danforth and Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundations. We are especially appreciative of our program officers, Stacie Goffin of the Kauffman Foundation, and Wilma Wells of the Danforth Foundation. Without the generous support of each of these philanthropic organizations, the Commission's work would not have been possible.